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Globalization and interdependence: development cooperation with middle-income countries

Letter dated 4 October 2017 from the Permanent Representatives of Belarus and Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to address you on behalf of the members of the Like-minded Group of Supporters of Middle-Income Countries: Armenia, Belarus, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama and the Philippines.

Under the co-chairmanship of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Belarus and Costa Rica, the Group held its second ministerial meeting in New York on 21 September 2017. In addition to the members of the Group, Ecuador, Georgia and Kazakhstan also participated in the meeting. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs joined the meeting and delivered their statements.

As an outcome of the meeting, the members of the Group adopted a ministerial declaration (see annex), which sets forth the goals, objectives and modalities of the Group.

Wishing to raise the awareness of the outcome of the second ministerial meeting of the Group, we should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 21 (d).

(*Signed*) Valentin **Rybakov**
Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Juan Carlos **Mendoza García**
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 4 October 2017 from the Permanent Representatives of Belarus and Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Second ministerial meeting of the Like-minded Group of Supporters of Middle-Income Countries

21 September 2017

Declaration

We, the Members of the Like-Minded Group of Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, Ministers of the Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Chile, Republic of Colombia, Republic of Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Republic of El Salvador, Republic of Guatemala, Republic of Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Republic of Panama and Republic of the Philippines, having met on September 21st, 2017 at the second Ministerial meeting of the Group on the margins of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly,

Acknowledge the efforts made by the Group in advancing the middle-income countries (MICs) agenda in the United Nations and agree to continue our work in order to promote greater visibility of MICs and to facilitate dialogue with UN Member States;

Recognize the efforts of our membership in having an active participation and deliver statements on behalf of the interests of MICs in key negotiations and events including, *inter alia*, the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment, the Forum on Financing for Development and the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and to have presence in the presentation of the Strategic Plans from the United Nations Development System (UNDS) programmes, funds and agencies, as well as the coordination of workshops to discuss technical aspects of the MICs strategy with strategic partners such as the World Bank, DESA and a thematic panel within the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment;

Underline our commitment with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and other relevant multilateral outcomes;

Recognize that middle-income countries still face significant challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard reiterate the need to better understand and address the diverse and specific development challenges of middle-income countries through a country-context approach, so that the United Nations system can provide more efficient, effective, better focused and coordinated support to strengthen the efforts of middle-income countries;

Note with concern that access to concessional finance is reduced as countries' incomes grow. Middle-income countries may not be able to access sufficient affordable financing from other sources to meet their development needs. We encourage multilateral development banks and international financial institutions to adopt graduation policies that are sequenced, phased and gradual in order to ensure an assistance that best addresses the opportunities and challenges presented by the diverse realities of middle-income countries;

Urge the United Nations to elaborate a comprehensive UN system-wide and long-term strategy aimed at facilitating sustainable development cooperation and coordinated support towards MICs as well as a transparent, more adequate and refined classification for this category of countries, that goes beyond the per capita

income — which does not reflect the development challenges that MICs face — to more comprehensive criteria that address the multidimensional nature of sustainable development. Express our readiness to closely cooperate with the relevant UN agencies and international financial institutions and reiterate the call to strengthen efforts to this end;

Acknowledge that identifying and addressing structural gaps can improve the understanding of development needs of middle-income countries;

Take note of the reform process taking place in the United Nations development system. We stress that the UNDS presence in middle-income countries should be adapted to address each country's particular challenges and development needs and we recognize the importance of the international assistance for sustainable development. We will actively participate in repositioning the United Nations development system towards greater transparency, accountability and full compliance with needs and priorities of the recipient-countries, especially middle-income countries;

Encourage the United Nations development system to adapt its governance structure to be more responsive to the needs of Member States in a more efficient approach. We call upon an improved coordination, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of operational activities for development, and thereby strengthen support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

Draw attention to the need to recognize poverty in all its forms. In this regard, addressing sustainable development in its three dimensions should be in a balanced and integrated manner in order to accomplish development and poverty eradication. Middle-income countries will respect each country's strategy to implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development while remaining consistent with relevant international rules and commitments;

Look forward to the submission of the UN General Assembly draft resolution "Development cooperation with middle-income countries" and to its successful adoption at the 72nd session of the UNGA;

Reiterate our determination to support the *advancement of an ambitious middle-income countries agenda by adopting a roadmap of actions for the Group to engage in the following years and invite other Members States to join this Like-Minded Group.*

New York, September 21st, 2017.